

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2296

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 CAIRO 5434

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG US SY LE

SUBJECT: FAHMY'S REACTION TO SECRETARY'S LAST MESSAGE ON LEBANON

REF: STATE 95617

SUMMARY: PASSED YOUR MESSAGE TO FAHMY TODAY. HE NOTED THAT, LIKE YOU, HE READS NUMEROUS DAILY REPORTS FROM ALL KINDS OF SOURCES, SOME SOLID, SOME NOT SO. GOE DOES NOT QUESTION OUR PURPOSES, BUT HAS SOME DOUBTS ABOUT OUR HANDLING OF LEBANESE PROBLEM AND IS NOT ENTIRELY CERTAIN WHAT WE WANT OUTCOME TO BE. HIGHEST LEVEL US LAUDATORY STATEMENTS OF SYRIAN ROLE, INCLUDING THAT OF PRESIDENT FORD, IS CERTAIN TO BE INTERPRETED BY SYRIANS, PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE LEADERS AS ENDORSEMENT OF ASAD'S ACTION. LATEST ASAD-ARAFAT AGREEMENT UNACCEPTABLE EVEN TO CHRISTIAN LEBANESE, WHO VIEW IT AS INTERFERENCE. HE READ ME SAMPLE OF EGYPTIAN REPORT FROM UNSPECIFIED ME POST ABOUT ALLEGED US TALKS WITH HUSSEIN AND RELATED JORDANIAN MATTERS. "EVERYONE" NOW CONSIDERS BROWN AS PRINCIPAL ARBITER OF LEBANESE SITUATION. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO GOE TO HAVE MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON BROWN'S NUMEROUS TALKS WITH FRANGIE AND WHAT THE LATTER INTENDS TO DO. ALSO ON

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HUSSEIN'S REAL INTENTIONS VIS-A-VIS WEST BANK.

REMINDED WE HAVE PROVIDED GOE WITH OUR ASSESSMENTS OF EVOLVING LEBANESE SITUATION AND ON PRINCIPAL ASPECTS OF OUR TALKS WITH HUSSEIN, FAHMY STILL ARGUED MORE INFORMATION DESIRABLE. END SUMMARY

1. MET WITH FAHMY THIS AFTERNOON. HE HAD COME FROM AN ALL-MORNING CABINET SESSION AND WAS TIRED. I GAVE HIM YOUR PRELIMINARY REACTIONS TO HIS EARLIER COMMENTS. HE LISTENED CAREFULLY AND THEN ASKED THAT I PASS ON FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS TO YOU:

2. AS YOU DO, FAHMY NOTED, HE READS A GREAT MANY REPORTS EACH DAY FROM ALL KINDS OF SOURCES, SOME SOLID, SOME NOT SO. NEITHER HE NOR THE PRESIDENT QUESTIONS OUR PURPOSES IN LEBANON AND THEY WISH US SUCCESS. HE THOUGHT THIS SHOULD HAVE COME THROUGH CLEARLY IN THE SEVERAL PRESIDENTIAL REPLIES TO YOUR MESSAGES SENT DURING THE EUROPEAN TRIP. FOLLOWING YOUR REQUEST, FAHMY CLAIMED, SADAT HAD SENT WORD TO BOTH JUMBLATT AND ARAFAT TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT. HE HAD DONE SO DESPITE THE FACT THAT GOE HAS SOME DOUBTS ABOUT THE WAY WE ARE HANDLING THE LEBANESE PROBLEM AND IS NOT ENTIRELY CERTAIN WHAT WE WANT THE OUTCOME TO BE. IF THERE IS A "WASHINGTON-CAIRO AXIS" (THE FIRST TIME I HAVE HEARD HIM USE THIS TERM), EACH PARTY MUST KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THE OTHER IS DOING AND NOT JUST IN GENERAL TERMS. ONLY IN THAT WAY CAN THEIR RESPECTIVE POLICIES BE COORDINATED.

3. FAHMY WONDERED IF WE HAVE CONSIDERED THE EFFECT OF "HIGHEST LEVEL" LAUDATORY STATEMENTS MADE IN US ON SYRIAN ROLE ON ASAD. HE MENTIONED IN PARTICULAR PRESIDENT FORD'S RECENT STATEMENT. IN FAHMY'S VIEW, ANY OBJECTIVE PERUSAL OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT MUST CONVINCE HEARERS THAT THE USG HAS AN ACTIVE ROLE IN LEBANON AND IS IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH THE SYRIANS, WHETHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES. USG (BROWN) NOW PLAYING LEADING

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ROLE IN LEBANON. GORSE HAS LEFT, UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING AND ASAD IS ANNOYED AT PUBLICITY BROWN AND USG ARE GETTING. "EVERYONE" IS PERSUADED THAT BROWN INTERVENED TO PRESS FRANGIE TO ACCEPT AMENDING ARTICLE 73 OF THE CONSTITUTION. THIS ALSO CAME THROUGH CLEARLY IN PRESIDENT FORD'S STATEMENT. THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENT ABOUT UNDOF RENEWAL ADDS TO THIS IMPRESSION. ADDITIONALLY, YESTERDAY RON

NESSEN HAD AGAIN PUBLICLY PRAISED THE SYRIAN ROLE.
HOW DO WE EXPECT THE SYRIANS, PALESTINIANS AND
LEBANESE LEADERS TO INTERPRET SUCH STATEMENTS?
THEY MUST CERTAINLY ENCOURAGE ASAD AND OTHERS TO
BELIEVE THAT THE SYRIANS CAN GET AWAY WITH MORE.

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2297

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NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

4. MOREOVER, AFTER OBTAINING A TEMPORARY
AGREEMENT WITH JUMBLATT, ARAFAT WENT TO SYRIA
AND CONCLUDED A SEVEN POINT AGREEMENT WITH ASAD
ON RESOLVING THE LEBANESE SITUATION. ARAFAT WAS
"CRAZY" TO BELIEVE THIS WOULD BE ACCEPTED. SO
WAS ASAD. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE LEBANESE WILL NOT
ACCEPT ANY SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT ON THE
FUTURE OF LEBANON. GAMAYYIL, WHO HAS BEEN STRONGLY
PRO-SYRIAN, NOW OBJECTS. SO DOES CHAMOUN. EVEN
FRANGIE IS BALKING. LEBANESE LEADERS REIGHTLY
SAY THEY WILL NOT ACCEPT AN AGREEMENT NEGOTIATED
WITH A "FOREIGN POWER" BY ARAFAT. SUCH SHORT-
SIGHTED ACTION BY ARAFAT AND ASAD MAY EVEN DELAY
FRANGIE'S RESIGNATION. DO WE REGARD THIS AGREEMENT
AS A CONSTRUCTIVE ACT ON THE PART OF THE SRYIANS,
FAHMY ASKED.

5. FAHMY THEN READ ME A REPORT HE HAD JUST RECEIVED
FROM A "MIDDLE EAST POST" REPORTING A TALK
BETWEEN AN EGYPTIAN EMBASSY OFFICER AND A ERUOEAN
DIPLOMAT. HE WOULD NOT IDENTIFY THE POST. SOURCE

STATED (A) HUSSEIN HAD TOLD WASHINGTON DURING HIS RECENT VISIT OF SYRIAN ACCEPTANCE OF UNDOF RENEWAL PRICE WOULD BE US SUPPORT OF SYRIAN ACTIVITIES IN LEBANON, (B) SOURCE RULED OUT ANY SYRIAN SUCCESS IN LEBANON AND SPOKE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A COUP
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IN SYRIA AGAINST ASAD. IF THIS HAPPENS, THE JORDANIAN-SYRIAN RAPPROACHMENT WILL BREAK UP (FAHMY OBSERVED THAT, JUDGING FROM OTHER REPORTS, THERE IS SOME TRUTH OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A COUP ATTEMPT), (C) SOURCE CLAIMED TO BE AWARE THAT A "QUARREL" HAD TAKEN PLACE BETWEEN YOU AND ZAID RIFAI DURING HUSSEIN'S LAST VISIT AND (D) SOURCE HAD BEEN RELIABLY INFORMED BY SOVIETS THAT JORDAN WILL NOT RECEIVE SOPHISTICATED ANTI-AIRCRAFT SYSTEM FROM SOVIETS.

6. FAHMY SAID HE DOES NOT BELIEVE OUR DISBELIEVE A REPORT LIKE THE ABOVE, BUT GAVE IT AS AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE KIND OF MESSAGES THAT ARE COMING IN FROM ALL QUARTERS THESE DAYS. IT IS IMPORTANT, THEREFORE, THAT WE KEEP GOE MORE FULLY INFORMED. FOR EXAMPLE, BROWN MUST HAVE HAD "DOZENS OF TALKS" WITH FRANGIE. WHAT DOES FRANGIE INTEND TO DO AND HOW DOES HE PLAN TO DO IT? HOW DOES FRANGIE SEE THE SITUATION EVOLVING? WHAT ARE BROWN'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE? ONLY WITH MORE DETAILED INFORMATION CAN GOE MAKE ANY MEANINGFUL JUDGMENT.

7. FAHMY ALSO AGAIN RAISED THE QUESTION OF TALKS WITH HUSSEIN. DURING SADAT'S VISIT TO US, ACCORDING TO FAHMY, WE AGREED TO USE THE HUSSEIN VISIT TO TRY TO WEAKEN THE SYRIAN-JORDANIAN COORDINATION. HAVE WE DONE ANYTHING ON THAT SCORE? DESPITE HUSSEIN'S ALLEGED ADHERENCE TO THE RABAT DECISION, SOME OF HIS ACTIONS THROW DOUBT ON THE BONA FIDES OF SUCH A CLAIM. WE MUST HAVE DISCUSSED WITH HIM HOW HE INTENDS TO MOVE IN THE FUTURE. WHAT DOES HUSSEIN EXPECT TO HAPPEN? IF HE INTENDS TO ABIDE COMPLETELY BY THE RABAT DECISION, WHY IS HE SO ANGRY ABOUT THE RESULTS OF THE RECENT WEST BANK ELECTIONS WHICH BROUGHT IN MORE PRO-PLO REPRESENTATIVES?

8. I AGAIN REMINDED FAHMY THAT WE HAVE SENT HIM REGULAR REPORTS ON BROWN'S ACTIVITIES BEFORE AND DURING SADAT'S EUROPEAN TRIP. WE HAVE MADE A GENUINE EFFORT TO KEEP EGYTIANS INFORMED. FAHMY
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AGREED MESSAGES HAD BEEN RECEIVED, BUT INSISTED THEY CONTAINED LITTLE OF THE DETAILS OF WHAT BROWN IS DOING. FOR GOE TO MAKE JUDGMENTS IT NEEDS MORE DETAILED INFORMATION, NOT GENERALITIES. I POINTED OUT WE HAD ALSO TOLD HIM ABOUT THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS DISCUSSED DURING THE HUSSEIN VISIT. HE AGREED WE HAD TOLD HIM ABOUT TALKS WITH HUSSEIN ON LEBANON AND NON-BELLIGERENCY, BUT HE COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT OTHER SUBJECTS-- INCLUDING HUSSEIN'S ASPIRATION VIS-VIS THE WEST BANK AND NOT COME UP. IN ABSENCE MORE HARD INFORMATION FROM US, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR GOE TO JUDGE THE CORRECTNESS OR OTHERWISE OF THE SPATE OF REPORTS IT IS RECEIVING ON LEBANON, ASAD AND HUSSEIN'S INTENTIONS AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS. FHAMY AGAIN STRESSED THAT, WHILE NEITHER HE NOR SADAT QUESTIONS OUR PURPOSES, THEY DO FEEL THAT THEY HAVE NOT RECEIVED AS MUCH INFORMATION AS WOULD BE HELPFUL TO THEM IN EVALUATING SITUATION. EILTS

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